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FM AMEMBASSY YEREVAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3864  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS YEREVAN 001230

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR DRL AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION "IRAVUNK" NEWSPAPER EDITOR ASSAULTED

REF: A) YEREVAN 830 B) YEREVAN 983

1. (U) The editor-in-chief, Hovanes Galajyan, of the opposition-linked newspaper Iravunk (Law) was attacked by two "skinheads" outside his apartment the morning of September 6. He was knocked to the ground and beaten by the assailants, but not seriously injured. There were no weapons involved.

2. (SBU) Galajyan told PAO staff that the attackers were lying in wait for him outside his building when he left for work. He is convinced that the attack is related to his newspaper work, but was unsure what exactly might have prompted the incident. The attackers fled when bystanders began to gather, having said nothing to indicate a motive. Galajyan had been threatened several days previously by an anonymous caller. Galajyan noted that his previous-day's editorial contained a harsh criticism of defense minister Serzh Sargsian, but he also noted that his paper has recently taken on a variety of other political and social topics. Galajyan told PAO staff he will not be intimidated, but will continue to publish as he sees fit.

3. (SBU) Iravunk has one of the largest circulations (about 9,000) of any print media in Armenia. The newspaper is officially sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Party, which is among the smaller parties in the opposition Justice Bloc.

EVANS